

Maine Office of Tourism Strategic Five Year Plan

Incorporating

Recommendations from the State's travel industry

Regional development opportunities

New and expanded strategic marketing initiatives



Preparing Maine's Tourism Industry Today

For Tomorrow's Success



Maine

June 2002

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SITUATION ANALYSIS

Six years ago, Governor Angus King requested the development of Maine's first strategic five-year tourism plan and a new era of visitor industry promotion began.

Since the introduction of the initial plan, which was designed to guide both the Maine Office of Tourism and the industry it serves, the marketing budget to attract visitors has grown from \$1.5 million to more than \$4.6 million annually. While this represents a large percentage increase, Maine remains close to the bottom of all states in terms of actual dollars devoted to the promotion of what is arguably the largest industry in the state.

And while Maine's tourism industry enjoyed steady growth from 1995 through 1999, the momentum was lost in 2000 and eked out a small increase in 2001. Much of the problem lies in increasing competition from other states and destinations for a greater share of the lucrative travel market.

Beginning next year, a newly legislated tax initiative, fueled by the lodging and restaurant industries, will boost the State's Marketing budget to attract visitors to nearly \$7 million dollars. Also provided in this budget is a 10 per cent allocation for regional tourism and special event promotion.

TOURISM AT A CROSSROADS

These important initiatives come at an opportune time. Today the tourism global industry is still feeling the effects of the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001 that further exacerbated the economic downturn in discretionary spending and consumer confidence, which had been underway since early spring.

THE STATE OF MAINE RESPONDS

To construct an effective competitive response, the state has set about the task of organizing and mobilizing its tourism marketing interests under a unified plan for the next five years, enabling it to better ensure Maine's tourism industry growth, expand market share, and meet challenges that may arise throughout the years ahead.

In order to gain industry input, a series of twelve industry forums were held this past October and November. Nearly 400 tourism industry constituents throughout the state participated in the forums and 365 people expressed their views by way of a web-based questionnaire.

This program, developed and conducted by the CPA firm of Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, provided significant direction for this strategic plan.

Following this process, the tourism marketing consulting firm of Marshall Murdaugh Marketing, in consultation with senior management of the Office of Tourism, produced this document, incorporating the recommendations from the industry and drawing on the extensive, multi destination hands on experience of Mr. Murdaugh and the Director of Tourism. Directional approaches have been included to supplement the ongoing, successful marketing initiatives of the Tourism Office.

Special appreciation is also due members of the Maine Tourism Commission and the members of the Stakeholder's Steering Committee whose leadership helped shape the direction and major findings of this report.

A BRIGHT TOURISM FUTURE THROUGH TEAM EFFORTS

Finally, this document is intended to build upon past efforts, offer new and expanded directions and capitalize on Maine's inherent strengths as a viable player in the Nation's tourism marketplace.

Through strong business alliances and partnerships across the State, this plan is expected to continue to leverage collective efforts, foster team building and provide an even more inclusive and synergistic program for the future.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

GOALS AND RECOMMENDED MARKETING INITIATIVES

- **Increase market share of tourism for the state of Maine** through expansion of existing program initiatives and strengthened regional promotion.
- **Continue to provide a minimum of 2 to 1 return on investment** in state tax receipts based on Maine's investment in tourism marketing.
- **Boost television advertising**—the most productive strategy for portraying Maine's motivational visitor appeals.
- **Expand visitation to Maine** by introducing all areas of the state to new marketing potential, through package tour development
- **Increase Maine's visibility** through new advances on the Internet, including introduction of new search engines to drive visitation, the sale of package tour programs, hotel /motel room reservations and electronic publicity dissemination.
- **Reach more consumers with positive editorial coverage** of Maine's great visitor diversity, four-season opportunities and regional appeals, through expanded media publicity programs.
- **In addition to the new dedicated funding, explore additional financial support opportunities for the regions**, through foundation support, to provide cultural arts and heritage advertising, educational & hospitality training and other resources.
- **Provide greater team synergism** and support for Maine's tourism regions by assigning a member of the Office of Tourism staff to work exclusively on product development and regional support.

The Role of the Maine Office of Tourism

Traditionally, state governments throughout the country have recognized the significant value of the travel and tourism industry. They have, to various degrees, committed tax revenue for the promotional support and expansion of the industry because of its contributions to the economic well being of its residents and businesses through the generation of visitor expenditures, resulting tax revenue and generation of jobs.

States have assumed the role of “umbrella” marketing agencies, under which stand the diverse businesses who are involved in the activity of serving travelers, including the transportation, accommodations, food service, retail, attractions, outdoor and cultural heritage agencies and entities, to name but a few.

The State seeks to attract out of state visitors by portraying through advertising and media promotion an array of attractions, amenities and activities, from the mountains and lakes to coastal areas which may be enjoyed in different seasons of the year. In other words, the State promotes a composite image of Maine in its entirety to attract the attention of potential visitors from outside the borders of the state.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Determining the success of the State’s umbrella marketing campaigns requires the monitoring of industry trends, economic impacts and ongoing analysis of state marketing initiatives to measure reach and frequency of motivational messages delivered, inquiries generated and conversion of inquiries into actual visitation. The ultimate measure of success is the achievement of a positive return on investment of state promotional funds due to the expenditures of visitors attracted to Maine as a direct result of the advertising and promotional programs. These results are measured annually by nationally recognized research firms utilizing proven methodology.

There will always be external influences that impact the state’s overall success, including inclement weather and natural disasters, competitive destination’s efforts, ever-changing economic conditions and other national and global events. But in general terms, Maine will continue to positively move its market share, and attract new visitors to Maine, based on its ability to expand its influence in the marketplace.

The Role Of The Maine Tourism Commission

The Maine Tourism Commission consists of 24 voting members, appointed by the Governor “to assist and advise” the Office of Tourism. The Commission is also charged with developing the criteria and guidelines for the application for and disbursement of cooperative marketing funds to regional organizations under the Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program, which will be significantly expanded as a result of the newly legislated funding. Additionally, ex-officio or non-voting members from tourism trade organizations and from several State departments work with the Commission to further its goals.

With a primary advisory responsibility to the Maine Office of Tourism, the Commission seeks to guide and support the agency’s efforts to maximize the significant economic benefits of the tourism industry throughout the state.

The Commission has articulated its goals as follows:

- To facilitate and promote all aspects of Maine Tourism.
- Increase public awareness of tourism through education.
- Strengthen and unify the industry through increased visibility and improved communication at grass roots, legislative and executive levels.
- Maintain awareness of all tourism initiatives.

The Role of the Regions

Tourism regions within states have been created for decades as marketing tools to attract visitors, based on the convenient availability of nearby clusters of visitor amenities and natural or man made attractions that offer incentive for travelers to come and visit. Experience has shown however, that regional names or designations, except in a few extraordinary cases, may not have branded value for the prospective traveler. The true utility and benefit of regions arises from the synergy resulting from cooperation among the tourism and business entities that can facilitate promotion and joint marketing of the specific amenities and attractions contained within the region.

Of significant note, the eight tourism regions of Maine were created by travel business leaders within each region and not by the State. Industry leaders have pointed out that the regions were formed nearly 20 years ago primarily to collectively market their tourism offerings and encourage cooperation among businesses directly and indirectly involved in tourism.

The State, based on its market research, sells to its motivational strengths, which may include various visitor appeals, and themed approaches that cross regional boundary lines. The regions, in contrast, promote their particular amenities, attractions, unique culture and geography to select groups of potential visitors who respond to the State's promotional efforts, as well as to visitors who have come to Maine.

Regions, therefore, are viewed as supportive components of the marketing mix; offering new products; differing personalities and unique visitor appeals.

In concert with the Maine office of Tourism, the regions should fulfill the following tasks:

- Work in partnership with the state to encourage the development of quality sustainable travel products to support tourism marketing efforts from the region and the Maine Office of Tourism
- Serve as the principal in-region informational conduit for the tourism industry and its business communities
- Foster and promote a collective spirit of cooperation among businesses within the region
- Develop promotional programming to support regional tourism interests

Recommendations from the Industry's Stakeholders

(Priority, collective recommendations from across the state gleaned from the regional meetings and the final survey)

Key Themes

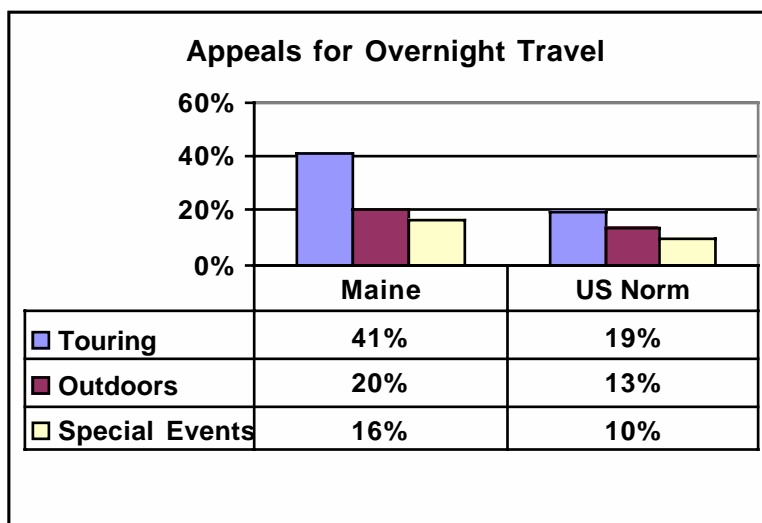
- An overwhelming majority of participants (95%) agreed with the existing goals of the Maine Office of Tourism, as articulated in the first five-year plan. In summary they are:
 1. Increase the number of first time visitors;
 2. Encourage visitors to stay longer, expand the geographic area of their visit and spend more;
 3. Make tourism a year round industry;
 4. Encourage repeat visitors to return more often.
- 76% of participants believed that increasing first time visitors should be the number one goal. This, together with marketing Maine as an exciting, four season destination, was thought to be most important in trying to compete with other states for visitors.
- The perceived lack of support for the tourism industry by local residents is a growing concern, which must be addressed.
- Finding the right balance between improving and expanding tourism products and attractions while preserving the character of Maine places is a concern recognized by the industry.
- 84% of participants ranked “marketing the State’s image” as the Office of Tourism’s primary role.
- The majority of participants would like the Office of Tourism to provide more market research on a regional level, more often, to help make marketing decisions at a local or individual level.
- Many participants, particularly from inland, down east and northern parts of the State asked for help with in-state marketing in order to increase intra-state travel and visitation.
- A significant portion of participants also felt the Office of Tourism should become directly involved in efforts to attract meetings and conventions, rather than leaving this entirely in the hands of the few C.V.B.’s and individual properties.
- Many participants wished to become better informed of the activities and promotions undertaken by the Office of Tourism in order to coordinate their efforts with those of the State.
- Additional funding, both at a State and regional level, in order to enhance Maine’s competitive position was recognized as essential.

Marketing challenges

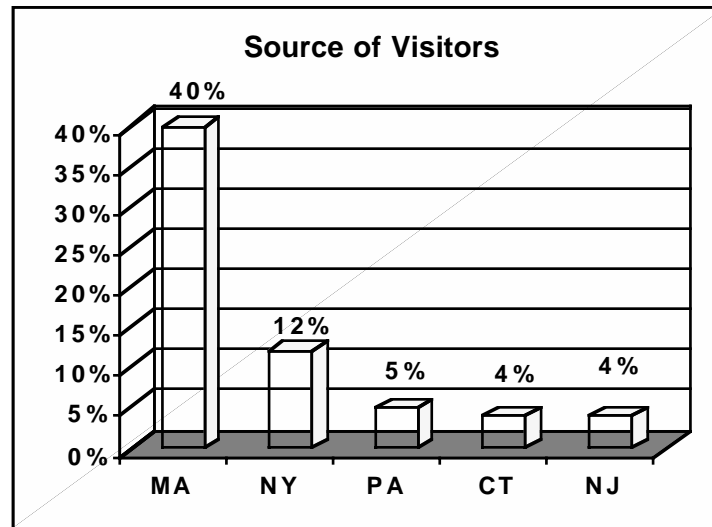
- **Maine's national market share of overnight discretionary travel trips has been flat from 1996 to 2000**, (with a 1.1 percent share), according to Longwoods International.
- **Maine's regional share of the national market for overnight discretionary trips by regional residents -- has diminished from 4.5 percent in 1994 to 3.5 percent in 2000**, according to Longwoods International. Longwoods attributes this decline in market share to Maine's historically small marketing budget.

Marketing Strengths/Opportunities

- **Maine will become more successful in building customer share of mind and market in the future, based on its growing marketing budget.** Next year with its expanded budget, it is anticipated that Maine will move up in ranking from the 40th state tourism budget to the 35th state, ahead of nearby competitors New Hampshire, Connecticut and Vermont.
- **Maine's strongest motivational appeals for overnight travel—touring, special events and outdoor travel—far exceed the US norm.** All offer strong attributes for customer attention and trip stimulus.



- **About two-thirds (65 percent) of all discretionary pleasure trips to Maine come from nearby states making it easier to reach potential new visitor markets.**



- **The Internet, which has become the second most used resource for trip planning other than personal experience, ranks high** for those planning trips to Maine.
- **Maine lags the national preference when it comes to the use of pre-packaged pleasure trips.** (9 percent vs. the US average 15 percent) This creates a new opportunity for the increased development of packaged tour programs to Maine, including two or more vacation components (accommodations, rent a car, attractions etc.).

RECOMMENDED NEW MISSION AND MARKETING PLATFORM FOR THE MAINE OFFICE OF TOURISM

To provide further clarity and defined purpose of the agency's role, the following Mission, strategic process, major objectives and strategic directions are recommended for consideration.

Marketing Mission

The mission of the Maine Tourism Office is to serve as the State's customer focused travel marketing organization: generating economic growth by aggressively marketing the facilities, amenities and services throughout the State that serve travelers.

As a result, the Office seeks to produce higher volumes of visitors over an expanded geographic area and during shoulder and off seasons, increased visitor receipts and tax revenues and the generation of career opportunities for the residents of Maine.

The Strategic Process

Sustain a market driven, customer-focused and benefit-oriented brand marketing program for the state:

- Relying on consumer research to provide directional guidance
- Implementing best practices of the industry to generate new business
- Evaluating ongoing program efforts continuously to enhance their success

Major Objectives

To fulfill its mission, the Maine Tourism office pursues the following objectives:

1. Generates positive awareness of Maine as a destination of choice for leisure travelers and meetings business—working specifically to increase first time visitors.
2. Stimulates interest and desire on the part of domestic and international consumers to take action and visit Maine
3. Maximize the length, frequency of stay and repeat visitation to increase economic generation and enhance the value of the visitor experience
4. Support the development of additional Maine tourism products to enhance the visitor experience
5. Increase the business volume of Maine's tourism business partners and constituents
6. Maintain a research base for Maine's tourism Industry

Strategic Directions

- **Have the marketplace perceive Maine as an exciting four-season destination**
- **Encourage visitors to experience more areas of the state**
- **Expand the reach and frequency of motivational messages to target markets**

PROPOSED NEW OR EXPANDED MARKETING INITIATIVES

In response to travel industry constituent needs

The following proposed initiatives are provided in response to the needs expressed by stakeholders and advisors during the strategic planning process. They are designed to effectively supplement the ongoing successful marketing efforts of the Maine Tourism Office.

New Regional and Event Development

Legislation now calls for an annual program of support to the regions, providing a ten per cent budget allocation from the Maine Tourism office for regional marketing and event development/support.

This provides an excellent opportunity for expanded regional initiatives which, when integrated into state marketing programs, will greatly enhance the efforts and the benefits derived. The regions should also have the opportunity to utilize these funds, where appropriate, to market in state to retain the Maine customer.

Two years ago, the state began the new Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program-- offering a variety of cooperative initiatives designed to provide new marketing options and leverage resources.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that this program be expanded to provide an even broader menu of marketing opportunities for the region's participation, including:

- Regional Market research
- Publications/collateral development
- Familiarization support for travel writers and tour operators
- Package and product development
- Trade Show participation
- Direct advertising
- Event development and marketing
- Direct mail
- Web Based Marketing

Recommendation: Developing a stronger statewide team effort.

Fostering communication between the state and the regions can be enhanced through the development of a new position for the Office of Tourism.

The Manager of Regional Product Development would serve as a strong liaison to regional interests throughout Maine to expand alliances and programming.

In addition, this individual would be available for educational training, establishing informational meetings and industry roundtables to foster team efforts.

Developing product offerings to drive additional travel to Maine.

Even before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, consumer confidence levels were beginning to show strong signs of weakness. Today's period of customer uncertainty has placed more concern on travel pricing, alternative destination selection and diversity of offering

In response, successful travel marketers must now offer additional ways for the consumer to select their destinations, through alternative itineraries with a variety of pricing and duration opportunities.

Recommendation:

The State should consider expansion of its efforts to create new travel products through packaging that will serve to diversify Maine's travel offerings and reach more potential consumers with various selections of things to see and do in a variety of price ranges.

Although the Office of Tourism strives to provide local informational support to the industry to consider packaging, consideration should now be given to contracting with a tour operator to actually produce new tour offerings.

The recommended strategy would be to expand the pilot packaging program currently in place. These package tours of Maine could then be promoted through traditional techniques including advertising, publicity, state travel publications and the Tourism Office's Web site.

Developing potential additional funding for regional marketing efforts

America's foundations—both corporate and individual—offer a new potential for destinations who seek to promote cultural and artistic amenities, develop travel industry educational training programs or seek to generate and sustain local jobs through visitor efforts.

Today there are an estimated 57,000 foundations throughout America. Many foundations located in Maine offer opportunities for tourism related funding and assistance in programming to support jobs. Last year, 26 foundations based in Maine provided grants totaling \$30 million dollars to a variety of organizations.

Usually a 501 c-3 foundation must be developed, but government agencies can also apply directly for these funds. Information on potential foundations, along with detailed market resource and planning information has been provided to the Office of tourism.

A resource manual will be provided to each region, providing detailed information on the methods for seeking Foundation funding. Provided by the Nation's Foundation Center of New York City, the materials include sections on Grant Resource searches, how to prepare grant proposals and other Internet resources.

Creating more customer awareness and interest in visiting Maine through heightened media publicity efforts

Newspaper travel sections, consumer travel magazines and other travel media have a powerful influence over the way Americans plan and choose their vacation travel. And this influence continues to grow, according to recent research from the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA).

A recent TIA survey found that 61 percent of travelers (82 million US adults) said they read articles about travel destinations in the media, or watch or listen to travel shows on television or the radio—up from 55 percent of travelers who said they used travel media the previous year.

There is also strong reliance and credibility with consumers in this media coverage. Sixty percent of travelers who relied on media said that consumer travel magazines, for example were extremely or very believable.

This information supports the need for Maine to continue expansion of its excellent public relations efforts to generate consumer attention and interest through media publicity initiatives.

Recommendations:

- A. **Expand the number of media familiarization tours** for writers to see Maine. One initial approach, which would also provide new regional opportunities, would be to highlight the regions through new FAM tour offerings.
- B. Pending available funding, consideration should also be given **to hosting upcoming meetings for any of several regional chapters of the Society of American Travel Writers, an important marketplace** for generating consumer publicity through writer familiarization.

Explore the feasibility of State support for meeting and convention development

A recommendation of the regional meetings was a request for the State's assistance in meetings/convention development.

Pending the interest of Maine's Convention & Visitor Bureaus, the Office of Tourism may provide an initiative to support additional conference business.

Historically, meeting planner professionals choose meeting venues based on city/resort venues and related support, rather than state identification.

However, Maine may heighten meeting planner attention for the State's conference sites through the development of:

- Broad-based advertising in selective meeting trade publications and delivering inquiry requests to local city / chamber/C.V.B.'s.
- Coordination and financial support for a Maine Meetings presence at major trade shows, including American Society of Association Executives and Destination Showcase.

Recommendation:

Assess CVB industry interest in participation and structure a program accordingly.

Driving new visitation with the World Wide Web

Today the Internet has surpassed all other media conduits as the most popular source for travel news and information.

Research from the Travel Industry Association of America confirms that fully 40 per cent of the American public use an Internet web site for travel planning, compared to 26 per cent who use motor club magazines, 25 percent for newspaper travel sections, 20 per cent for television travel shows and 17 per cent for general interest magazines.

Maine's web presence can be further developed to keep pace with this medium's significant presence in the travel market.

Recommendation:

Development of a new web-based marketing plan should be continued, putting in place the needed technology to drive additional visitor attention and ultimate conversion to visitation.

Major components will include enhancing the site's position through expansion of search engine utilization, new web commerce opportunities such as potential booking of accommodations and package tour programs, the dissemination of media publicity and other communications services such as additional, targeted E newsletters.

Making new inroads in the International travel market

Motivating international travel to Maine is being accomplished principally on a regional basis with Discover New England, a marketing organization funded by the six New England State Travel Offices. Continuation and expansion of this relationship is important.

However, there also exists a low cost, supportive initiative that should further stimulate results for the state over the long term.

Recommendation:

The Maine office of Tourism would profit from membership in the International Receptive Service Association. Headquartered in New York City, this important organization is a principal service supplier for the international tour operator community that drives leisure travel trips to the US.

Lucrative relationships can be forged by the State of Maine with these operators by attending quarterly meetings of the Association, in addition to their annual gathering.

Other opportunities with RSA may include state sponsorship of Association events/sales receptions or the hosting of selective receptive operators on site in Maine.

Work to expand existing regional tourism products and develop new ones

Additional funds for regional and special event promotion provide the opportunity to build new products and offers strong potential for generating increased visitation and resulting visitor spending.

Approaches should be considered for the following areas of opportunity:

- Special annual events
- Festivals
- Attractions
- Retail experiences
- Outdoor and adventure travel
- Eco-tourism
- Agritourism
- Competitive events and tournaments
- Visual and Performing Arts
- History and heritage activities

Recommendation:

Explore the establishment of a state-wide product development plan

A statewide team effort to assess industry capacity and opportunities for long term sustainable growth of visitor facilities and services requires a coordinated team effort of industry leaders and a wide array of government agencies.

Such an approach should be considered to provide for economic growth, while establishing the needs for preservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources.

Identifying more motor coach market opportunities for the state

Maine enjoys motor coach travel business because the States' principal appeal of touring is the very foundation of this segment of group travel. There is an opportunity to further assess the market and potentially increase it throughout the state.

An annual research study (The Tool Report) is now purchased by the state to quantify tour operators who are now using Maine for their tour programs. This is an excellent way to track Maine's success in marketing to these domestic tour operators and Motor coach firms. However, additional issues of The Tool Report, particularly for neighboring states, would be a good investment in analyzing new pockets of opportunity

Recommendation:

Purchases these reports for nearby competitive states showing the tour operator firms who are bringing motor coach business to neighboring states but are currently bypassing Maine.

Armed with this new information, the staff can then make personal follow up with these operators which will help determine the reasons that Maine is being left off the itineraries. The staff can then identify and develop targeted, persuasive sales messages to encourage these operators to add Maine offerings to their itineraries. (The Maine package tour offerings would provide a new product with potential interest to many of these motor coach firms.)

Conclusions

The foregoing document traces the strategic planning process undertaken over the past several months, from the information gathered from stakeholders at meetings throughout the state, from the suggestions and recommendations of the Stakeholders Steering Committee and from Tourism Commission members; through the analysis and development of recommendations and through numerous drafts and revisions.

The final result is the “new” 2002 Strategic Tourism Plan. This document was reviewed and commented upon by the Stake Holder’s Steering Committee, by Tourism Commission members, and by the attendees at the Governor’s Conference on Tourism on January 15, 2002.

As a result of this process and input received, this document and plan has been completed and will guide the activities of the Office of Tourism commencing the summer of 2002.

Maine Office of Tourism
Dann H. Lewis, Director

Marshall Murdaugh Marketing
Marshall Murdaugh, Principal

June 25, 2002
Augusta, Maine

Appendix A

2002 FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN

VISION

Maine is a special place that attracts special people from across the country and from throughout the world, first as tourists, then as residents and sometimes as entrepreneurs. Within the context of an emerging global economy, the growth of the tourism industry (which brings jobs and stability to the state) must be a cooperative effort among the various political, business and community organizations and individuals who must work together to support and promote a managed growth of tourism that recognizes and protects our natural, cultural and historical heritage. Strategies, plans and programs must be developed and implemented with the perception and needs of the visitor and local residents in mind.

PRINCIPLES

1. Tourism promotion and development is an ongoing, long-term effort.
2. Partnerships and teamwork are required between the private and public sectors in order to maximize Maine's economic potential.
3. Regions and communities are an important part of the tourism/economic development delivery system and need to coordinate their efforts with each other and with appropriate state programs.
4. We must protect, preserve and play to our strengths:
 - Great natural resources
 - Proximity to affluent eastern population centers
 - Variety of seasonal activities and attractions
 - Unique cultural and historic heritage
 - High quality of life
 - Quality work ethic
 - Low crime rate
5. The state should not and cannot be a substitute for private market initiatives.
6. A single entity, institution or organization cannot produce economic growth.
7. An educated work force is essential to economic growth.
8. A healthy economy and preservation of the environment are interrelated.
9. Managed tourism growth is an essential element of balance economic development.

GOAL

The basic goal of this five-year plan is to develop strategies that will generate a minimum of \$200,000,000 in tourism expenditures from visitors attracted by advertising annually. This will be done by:

1. Increasing the number of first-time visitors to Maine from both existing markets and from those beyond traditional areas;
2. Encouraging current visitors to stay longer, expand the geographic area of their visit and spend more;
3. Making tourism virtually a year-round industry;
4. Encouraging repeat visitors to return more often.

New visitors will be attracted to Maine from the traditional markets in nearby New England, from the New York-New Jersey-Washington, D.C. corridor, from more distant direct-air markets such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Chicago, and from select international markets.

STRATEGY

1. In addition to attracting new visitors, it is important to broaden the current tourism base – both in terms of time and geography. In order for this effort to be effective, we must work with regional organizations and statewide industry associations that are already successfully promoting tourism, and encourage and support regional groups to expand their capacity to promote tourism.
2. Our short-term efforts will include strategies to expand visitation in the shoulder seasons (May/June and November/December), while our long-term goal will be to make tourism in Maine a four-season industry. All this must be done without detracting from the summer tourism season, which traditionally accounts for half of all tourists spending.
3. Geographically, we will continue a marketing effort to encourage visitors to travel inland and to the northern regions of the state, by building on the already successful themed Trails program. At the same time, we will not lose sight of the under-utilized capacity on the coast during the summer months, and work to increase tourism activity on the coast during the winter months. In addition, we will work with regional organizations and statewide associations to expand marketing techniques for such concepts as eco- and cultural-tourism, and to encourage the development of facilities to enable tourists to travel inland and to the northern regions of the state.
4. Strengthen the climate of support that exists for the tourism industry by communicating the economic benefits of responsible tourism development to the general public as well as to the state and local government representatives.

This strategy will be accomplished through dissemination of information flowing from ongoing research programs to state and local media, other government agencies and the Legislature from industry and regional organizations.

5. Support development of effective regional organizations based on local and sub-regional public and private sector commitment to the goals of tourism promotion. Such development will be encouraged through a combination of matching promotional funds, region-specific market research and technical assistance integrated and coordinated around mutually agreed upon specific tourism goals. Funding will be provided by the newly established set aside of 10% of future tourism budgets for regional and special event marketing.
6. (a) Assist regional organizations and statewide industry associations with the development of packages which may be sold directly to consumers as well as through traditional travel trade outlets. Such packages, which will be both intra- and inter-regional in content, will facilitate both the geographic and seasonal spread of tourism throughout the state. These packages should include such concepts as eco- and cultural tourism, as well as driving tours for individuals and organized groups.

(b) Support convention and visitors bureaus, communities and regions interested in developing the meetings and conference business. This sector of the marketplace is under- developed, but is not weather dependent and is a proven tool to mitigate the peaks and valleys of seasonal business. Similar to the regional efforts, the Office would provide the umbrella positioning and advertising, while convention and visitor's bureaus and properties would provide point-of-sale marketing.
7. (a) Obtain increased share in existing markets, and

(b) Develop travel from new areas in the domestic, Canadian and selected overseas markets.

These strategies will be supported tactically by implementing a multi-faceted integrated marketing program, incorporating advertising, fulfillment, sales promotions and public relations.

MEASUREMENTS

The effectiveness of the marketing programs utilized in the implementation of this plan will continue to be measured by professionally conducted research programs. Numbers of visitors attracted by advertising, market awareness levels, visitor expenditures and economic impacts benefits will be monitored on an ongoing basis through programs already in place.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office of Tourism, in consultation with the Tourism Commission, will provide the leadership, marketing concepts and technical support necessary for this plan. The Office of Tourism through appropriate contractors will be responsible for developing and projecting the "image" of Maine, while the regional organizations and individual tourism businesses will develop the image of their region and provide the "hard sell," point of sale and product in existing markets.

The Office of Tourism will lead the effort to develop new markets in cooperation with industry partners such as airlines, car rental and bus companies, Amtrak, tour operators and wholesalers, meeting planners and others. Co-operative advertising and promotions as well as targeted public relations initiatives will be major elements of this program.

Individually no one entity can accomplish these goals. By working closely together and by pooling financial and volunteer resources, talent and ideas, Maine's tourism development process can move to the forefront of market leadership.

This overall effort would not be possible without the dedicated, consistent funding mechanism recently passed by the Legislature, which will insure a long-term planning and promotion effort. We will work to insure the revenues produced by increased promotion will be significant, attainable and sustainable, which will provide real beneficial impact on the economy of the state, its regions, its communities and its residents.

In reaching for our goal, and in planning and implementing our strategies, we must keep in mind why visitors come to Maine for the first time and why they return year after year. Our obligation and that of the industry must be to insure that what makes Maine unique – its natural resources, its character, its history, and its people – are not significantly altered, disrupted or damaged.